[8th September 1928

Appendix VII.

[Vide answer to question No. 307 asked by Mr. T. Adinarayana Chettiyar at the meeting of the Legislative Council held on the 8th September 1928, page 478 supra.]

Copy of letter from C. T. Mullings, Esq., Chief Engineer for Irrigation, to the Secretary to Government, Public Works Department, No. 1189/21-*B*-3, *dated the* 28*th October* 1925.

[Projects—Salem district—Badathalav project.]

There was a proposal of ancient date to cut a channel from the Kurumbapalle alias Markandanadi river to supply the Badathalav tank in the Krishnagiri taluk of the Salem district. The scheme was condemned in 1891 as not being feasible, but the reasons for this decision are not on record. As the tank was stated to be a good one and as the advantage would be undoubted if a supply channel could be made at a reasonable cost the Superintending Engineer then on special duty recommended the re-investigation of the project.

2. In reviewing the famine relief programme of the Salem district for 1909–10 it was observed that very little progress had been made in the direction of re-investigating the project and that the records of such work as had been done had been mislaid. The Superintending Engineer was therefore requested to submit a preliminary report on the project with a view to decide whether it was worth further investigation. It was also suggested that the question of water-supply might be examined in the first instance because the Krishnagiri project (since abandoned) had been held over on this account pending the results of the gaugings of the Ponniar river of which the Markandanadi is a tributary.

3. A preliminary report on the scheme was submitted by the Superintending Engineer in October 1910. The works proposed were :—

(*a*) an anicut 250 feet long across the Markandanadi at Marasamudram village ;

(*b*) a supply channel, with no head sluice, about 12 miles long to irrigate about 2,000 acres in all under the Badathalav and some other tanks ;

(*c*) fifteen cross drainage works with aqueducts ;

(*d*) pipe sluices for supplying mitta tanks.

The project proposed to bring an additional area of only 250 acres of Government dry land under wet cultivation and its cost was roughly estimated at Rs. 1·50 lakhs excluding indirect charges. The project was calculated to yield a return of 2 per cent with a water-rate of Rs. 4 per acre on the additional area. It was considered doubtful whether a productive project could be evolved at this cost, as there would probably be insufficient demand for water if the water-rates were enhanced.

4. Pending the examination of the preliminary report, the collection of data as regards the water-supply available was put in hand as there were no records of the discharge of the Markandanadi. The river was gauged at Marasamudram and gauge readings for 12 years from 1910–11 to 1921–22 are now available. An examination of the results show that there would have been sufficient water for an area of 2,000 acres in all these 12 years except 1918–19 which was a year of bad rainfall practically everywhere.

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5. On examining the preliminary report it is observed that the estimated cost of Rs. 1·50 lakhs for the project is based on very rough data. With the same data the cost of the project estimated at current rates amounts to Rs. 3 lakhs including direct and indirect charges. To admit of its being sanctioned as a productive work there should be a net revenue of Rs. 18,000 or a gross revenue of Rs. 20,900 or say Rs. 21,000 (including maintenance and collection charges). In the preliminary report of 1910, the revenue anticipated was stated to be as follows :--

	RS.
I. Remission which would be saved	1,800
II. Revenue due to improved supply from an area of 2,816 acres of ayacut wet at Rs. 2-8-0 per acre	7,040
III. Water-rate at Rs. 4 per acre on 250 acres of Government dry land	1,000

As regards item III above, it is observed that though 550 acres of Government and mitta land could be brought under wet, the Executive Engineer and the Superintending Engineer were of opinion that it would not be possible to irrigate the mitta area of 300 acres.

To get the gross revenue of Rs. 21,000 referred to above a water-rate of Rs. 48½ per acre as indicated below would have to be levied and this is out of the question :—

	RS.
Gross revenue	21,000
Deduct items I and II above	8,840
Water-rate on 250 acres	12,160
Water-rate per acre	48½

On detailed investigation the cost of the project may even go up by about 25 to 50 per cent.

6. The project is thus quite impracticable if it must be financed on mercantile lines, i.e., to yield a reasonable return on the capital outlay. Equally of course it cannot be protective as the failure of rains for the local crops must synchronize with the failure of this stream, on which the crops are expected to rely.

7. In the circumstances set forth it is recommended that the project may be abandoned on financial grounds.

Copy of G.O. Mis. No. 70 *I., dated* 3rd *February* 1926.

The Government accept the recommendation of the Chief Engineer for Irrigation that the project be abandoned.

(By order of the Governor in Council)

F. B. Evans,
Secretary to Government.